

SUPPORT HB 361: ENERGY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

A bill authorizing cities and counties to establish Energy Improvement Districts in order to make loans to property owners for energy efficiency and off-grid renewable energy upgrades.

Bill Number, Sponsor:

HB 361, Rep. Brady Wiseman (D-Bozeman)

Co-sponsors:

Sen. John Brueggeman (R-Polson), Sen. Ryan Zinke (R-Whitefish), Rep. Betsy Hands (D-Missoula)

Positive Bill Impacts:

- Jobs for the construction and renewable energy industries
- Lower energy costs for homeowners, businesses, and farmers
- Improved communities by enhancing private property
- Reduced environmental impact from energy consumption

How it Works:

- HB 361 will give Montana cities and counties the authority to create Energy Improvement Districts (EIDs). A municipality would then be able to issue special assessment revenue bonds in order to make loans to property owners within a District for purposes of installing off-grid renewable energy systems or making energy efficiency improvements to residential, commercial or industrial property.
- The boundary of an EID would match the municipality's boundary—any property owner within the municipality would be able to **voluntarily** participate.
- The bonds would be guaranteed with liens on the property of participating property owners.
- The loans could be repaid with a special assessment on the property tax of the participant.
- The interest rates on this financing would be competitive with market rate loans, but would be ideal for property owners who:
 - Do not want to incur personal debt tied to their name and would rather have the debt associated with (and stay with) the property.
 - Do not have a home equity line of credit available or would like to use it for something else.
 - Want to obtain a loan with a longer repayment period.

Background:

- Crippling energy costs, the slow-down in the construction industry, and a shrinking State budget demand innovative approaches to finance energy efficiency improvements. Local governments need new tools to help Montana home and business owners combat rising energy costs.
- Many Montanans are eager to make their homes or businesses more energy efficient and self-reliant, but often the installation or upgrade of insulation, new windows, and solar hot water heaters is cost-prohibitive. This bill would help to defray up-front costs for consumers.
- Similar legislation has passed and is working in Colorado, Connecticut and California and is pending in Oregon and Washington.

“We’re excited about the opportunity to be able to participate in a program that can help out energy conservation.”

Commissioner Derek Brown (R)

Lewis & Clark County Commissioner speaking in support of HB 361 at committee hearing

Supporters of HB 361 at House Local Government Committee Hearing:

- Dustin Stewart, *Montana Building Industry Association*
- Commissioner Derek Brown (R), *Lewis and Clark County Commission*
- Commissioner Robin Shropshire, *Helena City Commission*
- Anna Rosenberry, *City of Bozeman, Director of Finance*
- Carl Schweitzer, *Subcontractors Association of Montana*
- Alec Hanson, *League of Cities and Towns*
- Andy Tocke, *Home builder, Helena*
- Lynda Saul, *Interested homeowner, Helena*
- Mike Volesky, *Governor's Executive Office*
- Lynda Gryczan, *Alternative Energy Resources Organization*

Letters of Support for HB 361 Submitted to House Local Government Committee:

- Lewis and Clark County Commission
- Montana Renewable Energy Association
- CTA Architects/Engineers, *Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, Livingston, Missoula*
- Gillilan Associates, *Bozeman*
- Saturn Resource Management, *Helena*
- Sunelco, *Victor*
- Oasis Montana, *Stevensville*
- Liquid Solar Systems, *Bozeman*
- Winpower West, *Billings*
- Northern Sun Solar, *Butte*
- Mother's Power Renewable Energy Solutions, *Whitefish*
- Montana Energy & Design, *Livingston*
- Axmen, Axmen South and Axmen Propane, *Missoula*
- Riverworks, Inc, *Missoula*
- Sustainable Building Systems, *Missoula*
- Solar Montana, *Helena*

Concerns have been addressed:

- Amendments to the original bill removed the opposition of NorthWestern Energy and the Montana Electric Cooperatives Association. The amendments removed "grid-tied" renewable energy systems from the list of improvements eligible for financing with this bill.
- Energy efficiency upgrades, ground source heat pumps, solar heating systems, and off-grid renewable electric generators like wind turbines and photovoltaic systems are still eligible.
- Language was also added to clarify that participation is entirely voluntary and that the debt is guaranteed by liens on the property of participants, not the entire municipality.

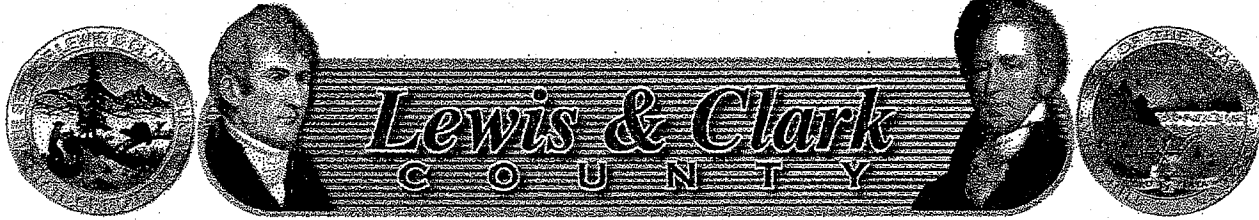
"I support this bill since it will stimulate investment in energy efficiency by our residential and commercial clients."

***Rick DeMarinis, P.E., Associate Principal CTA Architects Engineers
Offices in Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, Livingston, Missoula***

For more information, contact:

Linda Gryczan, Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) Lobbyist: (406) 431-3635
Ben Brouwer, AERO Energy Program Manager: (406) 465-7200, bbrouwer@aeromt.org

10

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS****Andy Hunthausen****Michael A. Murray****Ed Tinsley**

City County Building 316 North Park Helena, Montana 59623 406.447.8304 Fax: 406.447.8370

TO: Representative Brady Wiseman

(sent to the members of the House Local Gov Committee)

From: Lewis and Clark County Commission

Andy Hunthausen

Mike Murray

Derek Brown

Representative Arntzen and Honorable Members:

We are writing today to express our support for HB 361 allowing for Local Energy Improvement Districts. The bill will allow for local residents and counties to work together to address energy efficiencies and alternatives. Our energy issues will ultimately be solved locally and this bill can go some distance in assisting local bodies to improve the energy outcomes for their communities.

In addition, this is an opportunity to provide local governments one more tool in their tool box to help solve local problems.

Please support HB 361.

Thank you for time and service,

Andy Hunthausen

Mike Murray

Derek Brown

Dear Chairwoman Arntzen and members of House Local Government Committee,

I spoke with Rep. Arntzen last week about attending today's executive action on HB 361, which would allow local governments to form energy improvement districts. City budget hearings keep me in Bozeman today, so this letter must suffice.

I would like to address several concerns brought up during the prior executive action session on March 17. In this letter, I will discuss the voluntary nature of the program, how a city or county would handle defaults, and how a municipality would market the bonds.

As Finance Director for the City of Bozeman, and as a past Gallatin County Treasurer, I am very familiar with the work that local governments accomplish through the use of special improvements districts. I have been responsible for issuing bonds, financial management of construction, and the subsequent collection of the annual assessments from property owners on their assessment or general property tax bill.

One of the wonderful things about improvements in these proposed Energy Improvement Districts is that all the work, and the assessments, are voluntary. By the nature of the improvements this is very different from a street improvement district, where everyone in the district benefits from the street and must pay for the street. The property owner that enters into the contract to receive energy improvements will be the one paying for the improvements – and is also the one who will see decreased energy bills as a result of the work. Tax payers not using the energy improvement district would not be responsible for defaults. Defaults would become a lien on home or business property that received the improvements, to be collected in the same manner as other liens for special improvement districts.

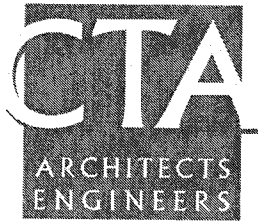
Whether the bonds are issued as revenue bonds or special obligation bonds, there will always be a need to show prospective bond holders that they are a good investment. A community could do this by ensuring that the improvements that are going to be undertaken have solid energy-savings performance that outstrips the costs of the work over a rather short period of time (payback) and by showing that the tax delinquency rates in the district are relatively low to begin with. Communities that were willing to require an in-advance assessment or down payment from property owners to establish a reserve fund would also offer assurances to potential bond holders. Just like with General Obligation Bonds or Tax Increment Bonds, issues of marketability are affected by the nature of the improvements you are borrowing money to build, and the specific financial circumstances in place in the community of borrowers.

This is a bill that will give cities and counties a new tool to help property owners make their homes, businesses and farms more energy efficient. It will help to bolster the construction industry with new jobs for energy retrofits, insulation contractors, window installers, and off-grid renewable energy installers.

Please support HB 361.

Best regards,

Anna Rosenberry



April 6, 2009

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

CTA has been in the architectural design business since 1938, and we have not experienced a recession this serious since perhaps those early days. We have observed a severe downturn in requests for our design services which have had an impact on the number of design and support staff we can employ. CTA currently employs 250+ people in Montana but has recently had to reduce our staffing levels in response to the current economy.

I support this bill since it will stimulate investment in energy efficiency by our residential and commercial clients who will then need design and construction services that our firm offers. This would directly impact the 250 families in Montana our company supports and, of course, the construction industry in general. These energy efficiency improvements also have a benefit to the environment through reduced fossil energy use and promote green technologies.

Loans for these projects would be paid back by real energy cost savings generated by the implementation of energy efficient projects. This concept has been used successfully by Energy Saving Performance Contract (ESPC) companies for many years and should be made available to the many smaller residential and commercial entities throughout Montana.

Thank you for your consideration,

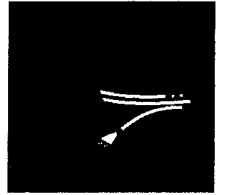
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. DeMarinis".

Rick DeMarinis, P.E.

Associate Principal
CTA Architects Engineers

Saturn Resource Management, Inc.

324 Fuller Avenue, N-13 • Helena, MT 59601
Phone (406) 443-3433 • Fax (406) 442-1316
www.srmi.biz



To: Senate Local Government Committee
Re: HB 361

April 6, 2009

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government Committee,

I'm writing in support of House Bill 361, authorizing local governments to enact local Energy Improvement Districts.

This **innovative and low-cost financing tool** will support the sagging construction industry, help homeowners who struggle with high utility costs, and improve the quality of our housing stock. **Similar programs are already in play** and working effectively in several communities in the U.S.

Our firm provides technical training for the energy efficiency industry. **Buildings in the U.S. consume about 40% of all the energy we use**, and our textbooks and classroom training are directed towards reducing that energy waste. Yet we have long recognized the financial difficulty faced by homeowners who choose to install energy efficiency improvements in their homes. **HB 361 provides an ideal financing mechanism for citizens who want to do their part** to reduce energy consumption, combat climate change, and support their local communities.

I urge your support of HB 361. It will provide stability to Montana communities by helping ensure our future energy security. This is a perfect time to enact this forward-looking legislation.

Best regards,

Chris Dorsi
Vice president – Saturn Resource Management

Montana Energy + Design

Smart Houses - Beautiful Homes

April 6, 2009

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

I've been a homebuilder and designer in SW Montana since the mid 1970's. I was active in the South West Montana Homebuilders Assn., including a term as Board Chairman. During those years, I survived a number of economic downturns. I've never seen anything this serious. Our current economic crisis has stopped the construction industry in its tracks.

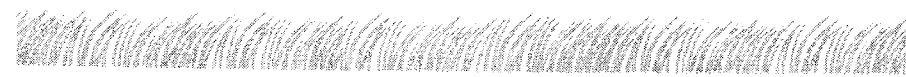
I support this bill for two reasons: First, I think that this bill would inject some much needed financial stimulus into Montana communities without resorting to additional governmental expenditures or taxes. Under this law, property owners would be obligated to repay loans and would do so with the cash made available by lower utility bills. These funds would continue to circulate in the local economy. Secondly, by making our building stock more energy efficient, we make our local communities more self sufficient and less vulnerable to external economic forces.

Property owners will win with this bill. The construction industry will get back to work, more of our money will stay in the community and energy prices will be more stable. This is a win-win situation for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration,

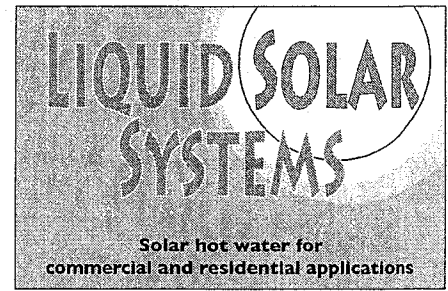


Jim Baerg



MEMORANDUM

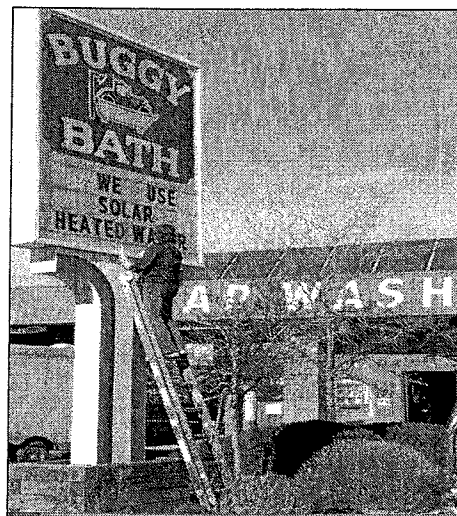
TO: Madame Chair & Members House Local Government Committee
FROM: Todd Hoitsma, Owner, Liquid Solar Systems, Bozeman, MT
DATE: 2/4/09
RE: Support for HB361 – Local Energy Improvement



This letter is to ask you to support HB 361 – that proposes loans to property owners for energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades. As an installer of solar hot water systems (also known as solar thermal systems) the timing of this letter could not be better. Just yesterday my company completed an install of a solar thermal system at a local car wash. This system, with 8 solar thermal collectors helps the owner reduce her utility bills – typically \$2,000 to \$3,000 per month - associated with heating water for car washing.

This was the first project funded by the Big Sky Revolving Loan Fund, a new loan program partially funded by monies from Bozeman's impact fees on "big box stores." The program allows small businesses to invest in renewable energy systems or energy conservation programs that they otherwise could not afford. Our economic analysis, which was verified by a Bozeman Chamber of Commerce economist, showed that the solar hot water system would provide the carwash owner with a 6% percent return on investment (ROI) over 20 years when accounting for the energy savings provided by the solar thermal system.

In addition to providing the carwash owner with energy savings, such projects also generate jobs. This job kept several employees busy at a time when many plumbers, builders and general contractors cite a lack of work. Like the Big Sky Revolving Loan Fund that helped make this project possible I strongly believe HB361 will create jobs for businesses like mine as well as for general contractors that are learning more and more about the value of energy efficient heating systems and well designed, well insulated buildings. Of course all recipients of such loan funds will be able to save money on energy costs. Small businesses -- like the owner of the Buggy Bath car wash (see photo) -- will ultimately be more competitive and profitable after implementing energy improvements that HB361 supports.





Mother's Power

Renewable Energy Solutions

420 East Third Street

P.O. Box 580

Whitefish, MT 59937

406.250.7853

April 6, 2009

Members of Local Government Committee
Montana Senate
P.O. Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Dear Members of the House Local Government Committee:

I am writing to express my gratitude for the work you do and to request that you please support HB361. I believe that this Bill is an important step forward for Montana that has proven to be effective in other states. As a small Montana business owner, I am confident that this bill will directly contribute to new jobs and new opportunities throughout our great State.

I strongly believe that it is time for Montana to join the ranks of the States that are leading the way to sustainable energy independence for our Nation.

Thank you once again for all your good efforts.

Best regards,

Jeff Arcel
CEO
Mother's Power, Inc.
jarcel@centurytel.net



www.winpowerwest.com

April 6, 2009

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

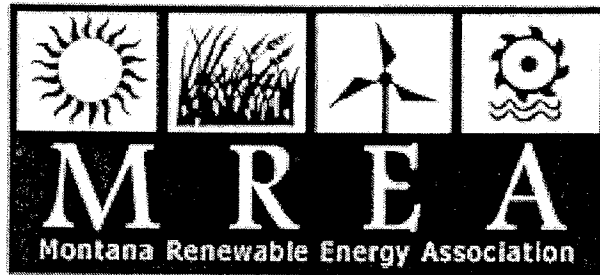
I have been designing and installing alternative/renewable energy systems since 1987, and I am active in the Montana Renewable Energy Association, as well as other organizations that promote clean, renewable energy throughout our state and the nation. The current economic crisis is, in great part, a function of our reliance on carbon based fuels and that situation will only get worse.

I support this bill for two reasons: First, I think that this bill would inject some much needed financial stimulus into Montana communities without resorting to additional governmental expenditures or taxes. Under this law, property owners would be obligated to repay loans and would do so with the cash made available by lower utility bills. These funds would continue to circulate in the local economy. Secondly, by making our building stock more energy efficient, we make our local communities more self sufficient and less vulnerable to external economic forces.

Property owners will win with this bill. The construction and renewable energy industries will benefit with additional work (and hiring new employees!), more of our money will stay in the community, and energy prices will be more affordable and stable in the long-run for the owners/users of the properties affected by the passage of this bill. This is a win-win situation for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ben Reed
Owner, Winpower West



February 5, 2009

Madame Chair, and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

The Montana Renewable Energy Association (MREA) would like to go on record in strong support of HB 361, a bill to allow local governments the ability to create Energy Improvement Districts (EID). These districts would help citizens to finance energy efficiency or renewable energy projects. By doing so, the bill would help Montanans to become more energy independent, while conserving natural resources and supporting local businesses – principles that are very much in keeping with Montana's stated energy policy goals (e.g. MCA 90-4-1001, 69-8-601, 69-3-2002).

While there are a number of financial incentives that already exist at the state and federal level, too often these come at the back-end of the process (as is the case with income tax credits, for example, or with certain rebates). Businesses and homeowners would benefit from a local EID that could provide them an up-front loan to help finance a project. Once a home is weatherized, or solar panels are installed, the property owner would see an immediate and sizeable reduction in the monthly energy bill. Those savings can then be used to pay back the loan. Once the loan is repaid, the property owner pockets all future savings, while enjoying the many benefits of clean and efficient energy.

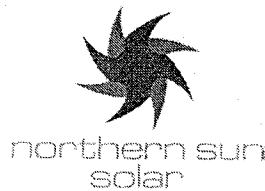
MREA respectfully requests your enthusiastic support of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Judge', is written over a light-colored background.

Patrick Judge, MREA Secretary
107 W. Lawrence, Suite N10
Helena, MT 59601
406/513-1001

MREA is a 501 c3 nonprofit incorporated in Montana whose membership includes utilities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and renewable energy businesses located both inside and outside Montana. It was founded in 2001, and its mission is to expand the use of renewable energy technologies in Montana; to affect public policy in favor of renewable energy; and to educate and inform residents of Montana of the benefits and uses of renewable energy.



February 4, 2009

Re: HB 361 – Energy Improvement Districts

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee:

I would like to ask for your support of HB 361, which authorizes cities and counties to establish Energy Improvement Districts.

Improving energy efficiency and installing renewable energy systems frequently have high associated capital costs. Because of this, many individuals and organizations continue to operate inefficient heating equipment and/or waste fuel through ineffective walls and windows. Some owners are unable to finance improvements to these buildings, while others are currently unable to justify the capital cost based on the current cost of fossil fuels. When energy prices increase sharply, those individuals or organizations that are unable to finance energy improvements will be unable to continue to adequately heat or cool their buildings. Those who can afford to make the improvements will need to make upgrades quickly. Cycles like this are likely to be more common in the near future as competition for remaining fossil fuel supplies, and therefore prices, increase. This cycle of boom and bust is not conducive to a healthy alternative energy industry in Montana. When energy prices are high, the alternative energy industry thrives. When the prices drop, the alternative energy industry can disappear.

Energy conservation, efficiency, and alternative energy production have never been more important than they are now. HB 361 provides a way forward for local governments that would like to improve their energy efficiency and alternative energy production. There are many reasons this is appealing, not the least of which is providing some insulation from world and regional energy price fluctuations. Montana can be a leader in this field and help start a movement toward a society where we use energy appropriately without significantly compromising our way of life. Waiting for this movement to happen on its own will only result in economic disaster for the State of Montana and the United States as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hagen
Northern Sun Solar, LLC

2086 US Hwy. 93 North
Suite 130
Victor, MT 59875



406-7
800-
Fax 406-7

February 3, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

The future of America is at a crossroads. If the news stories we are hearing are correct we are at the brink of the worst economic downturn since the 1930s. Most citizens are asking and genuinely want to know how they can help the country turn back or stem the tide of economic failure we are facing. We are all willing to do our part but we need our legislators to pitch in by facilitating new and innovative ways to finance home and workplace energy conservation, weatherization and renewable energy installation expenses.

As you are no doubt aware, Montanans are ranked 40th of the 50 states in median household income. This indicates that we as citizens can make good use of low cost loans to improve our residences. With the current difficulty of homeowners in obtaining conventional residential loans, it would be a great boost to the economy to be able to facilitate home weatherization and installation of renewable energy products while putting other members of our community back to work.

Sincerely,

Tom Bishop, President
Sunelco, Inc.
The Sun Electric Company

**Oasis Montana Inc.**

436 Red Fox Lane

Stevensville, MT 59870 U.S.A.

Fax: 406 777-0830 Local Line: 406 777-4309 or 4321

Toll Free: (877) OASISMT (877-627-4768 or 4778)

Web Page: www.oasismontana.comE-Mail: info@oasismontana.com4th February, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee:

I am writing you to ask for your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

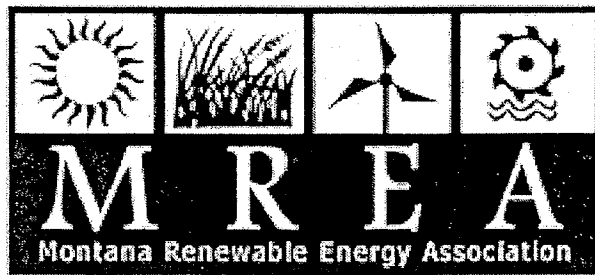
I live here in the Bitterroot Valley, near Stevensville, and I have a business that designs and sells equipment for renewable energy power systems. My business has seen its ups and downs over the years, but the current economic situation has had a tremendously negative impact on jobs and construction work in our area. Despite the tremendous interest in renewable energy technologies in Montana (and indeed, across the U.S.), folks just don't have the money to make this sort of investment. And our sales are down 60% from last year, at this time.

I believe this bill will have a positive impact on the construction industries and on my business. It will also promote lower energy costs for consumers, ranchers and farmers, and promote clean and green technologies, resulting in less pollution and less environmental damage, and it will help make Montana more self-reliant in terms of decentralized energy production.

I think this bill is a good idea, all around. Thanks for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Chris Daum, President
Oasis Montana Inc.



February 5, 2009

Madame Chair, and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

The Montana Renewable Energy Association (MREA) would like to go on record in strong support of HB 361, a bill to allow local governments the ability to create Energy Improvement Districts (EID). These districts would help citizens to finance energy efficiency or renewable energy projects. By doing so, the bill would help Montanans to become more energy independent, while conserving natural resources and supporting local businesses – principles that are very much in keeping with Montana's stated energy policy goals (e.g. MCA 90-4-1001, 69-8-601, 69-3-2002).

While there are a number of financial incentives that already exist at the state and federal level, too often these come at the back-end of the process (as is the case with income tax credits, for example, or with certain rebates). Businesses and homeowners would benefit from a local EID that could provide them an up-front loan to help finance a project. Once a home is weatherized, or solar panels are installed, the property owner would see an immediate and sizeable reduction in the monthly energy bill. Those savings can then be used to pay back the loan. Once the loan is repaid, the property owner pockets all future savings, while enjoying the many benefits of clean and efficient energy.

MREA respectfully requests your enthusiastic support of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Judge', is placed below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Patrick Judge, MREA Secretary
107 W. Lawrence, Suite N10
Helena, MT 59601
406/513-1001

MREA is a 501 c3 nonprofit incorporated in Montana whose membership includes utilities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and renewable energy businesses located both inside and outside Montana. It was founded in 2001, and its mission is to expand the use of renewable energy technologies in Montana; to affect public policy in favor of renewable energy; and to educate and inform residents of Montana of the benefits and uses of renewable energy.



7655 HIGHWAY 10 WEST

MISSOULA, MT. 59808

(406) 728-7020

WWW.AXMEN.COM

4-6-09

RE: HB 361

The Axmen, Axmen South, and Axmen Propane would like to express their support for House Bill 361.

We consider this a very worthwhile tool to help Montana citizens be active partners in addressing the energy issues that we all bear responsibility for improving.

Our companies and our employees are committed to being part of the solution and we would appreciate your support.

Guy Hanson



From gadgets to home systems

complete installations...

**PO BOX 4196 * HELENA, MT * (406) 442-4828 * www.solarmontana.com
330 Fuller Ave. STE 1**

April 6, 2009

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

I have been in the renewable energy business since 2004, and have operated Solar Montana since 2005 here in Helena, Montana. I am currently a board member on the Montana Renewable Energy Association.

The renewable energy industry is in a burgeoning stage, but with the recent economic down turns I have began to see more restraint in new projects. Renewable energy projects are undoubtedly expensive, and one of the chief complaints I hear from potential customers is the lack of funding available.

This bill would allow families to make the kind of improvements that will initially create higher paying jobs, reduce household energy expenditures, and allow more funds to float in the local economy

This bill will allow the next stage in Montana's renewable energy development, and I fully support it and ask for your support.

Sincerely,

Jack Isbell
Owner, Solar Montana



To: Members of the Senate Local Government Committee
RE: HB 361

I am the Director of a business Missoula that works to improve built environment energy efficiency through energy analysis using energy modeling, blower doors, duct blasters and thermal imaging, as well as through programmatic verification work under the NAHB Green Building Guidelines, LEED for Homes, Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) and National and NW Energy Star for Homes programs. We also work on small scale renewable energy (RE) systems, including photovoltaics, solar thermal, micro-hydro and small wind.

I am writing to express my adamant support for HB 361. I cannot stress the importance having of this kind of financing available to businesses and individuals enough. Since the inception of our business, we have struggled to find ways to assist clients in the financing of increased energy performance of new homes, efficiency retrofits for existing structures and for RE systems. We have looked extensively into Energy Efficiency and Energy Improvement Mortgages (EEMs and EIMs), looked at the sale of carbon offsets and green tags, as well as worked through the DEQ's Renewable Energy Revolving Loan Program. While these programs are well intentioned and successful to varying degrees for various applications, they present substantial technical and administrative barriers to actually securing funds and we are in dire need of accessible financing to help get efficiency improvements and RE systems on the ground. Easily accessible funding mechanisms are a critical link in bridging the sometimes increased upfront costs associated with increased energy performance, allowing for the realization of an extensive list of value-added benefits including but not limited to: The realization of long term cost savings and significant reductions to GHG emissions. The creation or bolstering of efficiency related and RE jobs in the state. Reductions to peak energy demands associated with the heating and cooling of homes (and subsequently, GHG emissions and energy infrastructure required to meet demands). Improved indoor air quality, occupant health, building durability and comfort. And the ability for local government to facilitate and benefit from efficiency improvements and small scale, locally financed and installed, disbursed RE energy generation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Have an excellent day-

Sincerely,

Sam Hall, LEED-AP, RESNET-Home Energy Rater, NAHB-Green Home Building Verifier
Director of Operations, Sustainable Building Systems, LLC
T/ (406) 396-2661
W/ www.sustainablebuildingsystems.com
E/ shall@sustainablebuildingsystems.com

GILLILAN ASSOCIATES, INC.



Water and Land Conservation and Restoration

April 6, 2009

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

Our local economy is in dire straits with the collapse of the building and development industry and far too many talented builders are unemployed or grossly under-employed. Further, within our community we have several renewable energy and energy efficiency businesses that are also beginning to suffer with the overall downturn in homeowner spending.

I support this bill for several reasons: First, I think that this bill is a perfect example of the innovative thinking proposed by President Obama with respect to creating sustainable jobs and reducing our dependency on foreign oil. It is elegantly funded so that it does not create unwarranted tax burdens on those who chose not to participate in the program, and the money spent would continue to circulate in the local economy. If Montana is going to give more than lip service to re-tooling for 21st Century jobs and efficient and smart use of energy we need bills like this one. As a small business owner I offer my most enthusiastic support for this bill.

Sincerely,



Scott Gillilan
Principal

April 6, 2009

John Freer
Riverworks, Inc.
2825 Stockyard Road, C3
Missoula, MT 59808
406-370-1660

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government Committee,

I am writing to lend my support of HB 361 authorizing cities and counties to establish Energy Improvement Districts. As a residential contractor and long time proponent of green building and energy efficient practices, as well as the founder and current chairman of the Montana Green Build Program, I am excited to see new and innovative ways to help homeowners and business owners decrease their energy expense.

I feel the benefits of such EID's reaches far beyond just a reduction in heating and cooling costs but includes significant environmental benefits, improved community benefits through private property enhancement, and great benefits for our Montana workforce. HB 361 will not only help getting many Montanans in the homebuilding industry back to work, but will aid in creating new jobs overall in the "green" and renewable energy industries.

Sincerely,

John R. Freer CGB, CGP, LEED AP
Riverworks, Inc.
Montana Green Build Program

April 6, 2009

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government Committee,

Regarding HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

I am a homeowner in Lewis and Clark County and own a rental house in the city of Helena. Many homeowners and building owners would like to make their buildings more efficient and less energy hungry, financially and environmentally. The high up front costs for projects often deters them. I believe this approach allows the community to proactively support targeted energy improvements that benefit the whole community, stimulates local business, with a formula that does not penalize the taxpayer.

I ask you to support this bill.

Thank you,

Maxwell Milton
111 Alfalfa Road
Helena, MT 59602